

Upgrading to VAFiling Version 3.0

An Addendum to the Instructions for Experienced Users

April 15, 2004

Welcome to VAFiling 3.0, the software that allows candidates and political committees to organize their financial transactions and prepare periodic reports required by the State Board of Elections. Those of you who have been using the earlier versions of the software will be familiar with the “look and feel” of this new version. You also will find several improvements that will make it easier for you to compile the reports. The printing feature has been greatly streamlined and the need to repeatedly select the filing period has been eliminated. The back-up feature to protect your data has been strengthened.

The software will work with your existing database. The installation process – all handled online – has been designed to provide a seamless transition from Version 2.2 to Version 3.0.

The State Board of Elections would like to thank the dozens of candidates and political committees who offered their suggestions for improving VAFiling and the handful of volunteers who tested the program in the winter of 2004.

We welcome your feedback at cfda@sbe.state.va.us

SECTION 1 – Updating to Version 3.0

Section 1.1 – Prepare Your Data for Conversion

Candidates and committees that filed campaign reports in January 2004 should make sure that the last summary schedules saved were for the 01/15/2004 report.

1. Launch VAFiling Version 2.2 and open your existing database.
2. Click on View/Edit → Profile → Preset Values
3. Double-check the “Preset Values” to make sure they are from the filing period immediately prior to the report filed 01/15/2004. (General Assembly candidates should enter the numbers from the report due 12/04/2003. Political committees that filed pre-election reports for the November 2003 election should enter the numbers from reports due 10/27/2003. Political committees that did not file pre-election reports should enter the numbers from the report due 07/15/2003.)
4. Click OK and then UPDATE.
5. Click on View/Edit → Schedule G
6. Double-check the filing period selected in the upper left hand corner to make sure the filing period ends on 12/31/2003.
7. Click OK and Exit

Section 1.2 – Download/Install Version 3.0

The State Board of Elections has given users the convenience of downloading the installation files directly from the Internet. Estimated download times are:

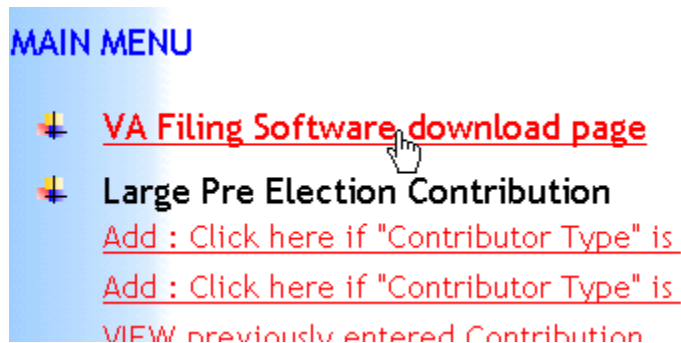
Modem Type	Download Time
56K Dial-Up Modem	1-2 Hours
DSL	5 Minutes
Cable Modem	1 Minute

Those who would prefer to purchase a CD-ROM will be charged a \$6.00 shipping and handling fee. Please download an invoice from http://www.sbe.state.va.us/Campaign_Finance/Electronic-Filing/E-Filing/VAFiling_Invoice.pdf and send a check for \$6.00 payable to the Virginia State Board of Elections to Campaign Finance Division, Virginia State Board of Elections, Suite 101, 200 North 9th Street, Richmond, VA 23219-3485. **Those who install with CD-ROM should insert the disk in your CD Rom drive and skip to Step 8.**

Point your browser to the Committee Login site:

then open up (double-click on) Internet Explorer and sign on to the secure web site at
<http://www.sbe.state.va.us/cfda/large/index.asp>

STEP 1: Click the menu item named "VA Filing Software download page" as shown in the following figure:

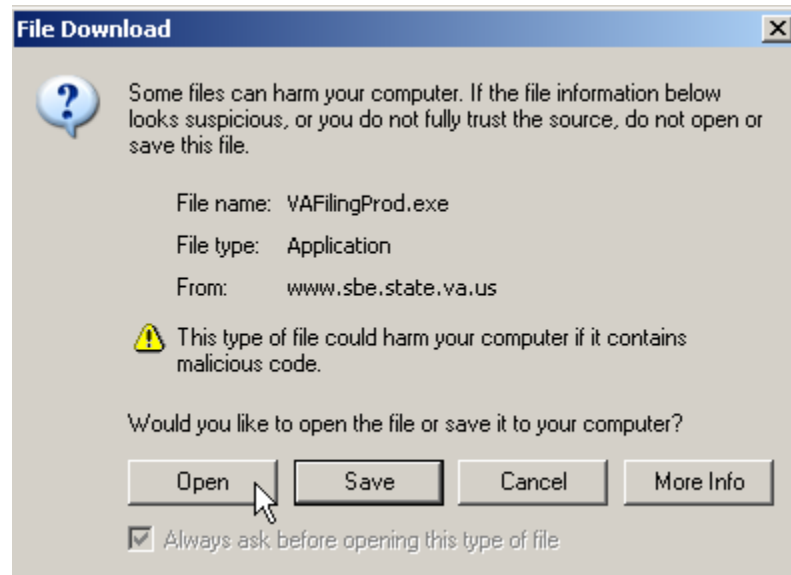


STEP 2: Now, click on the link to download the setup program as shown below:

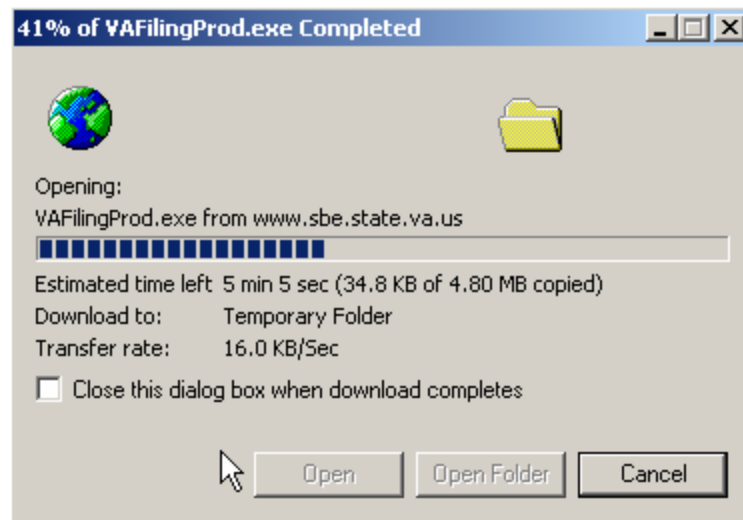
Download Setup Program for VA Filing - Version 3.0

STEP 3: This will bring up the File Download box. When the File Download box appears (see below), you must click on the button that allows you to OPEN the file from the current location. Go ahead and click the OPEN button as shown in the figure below.

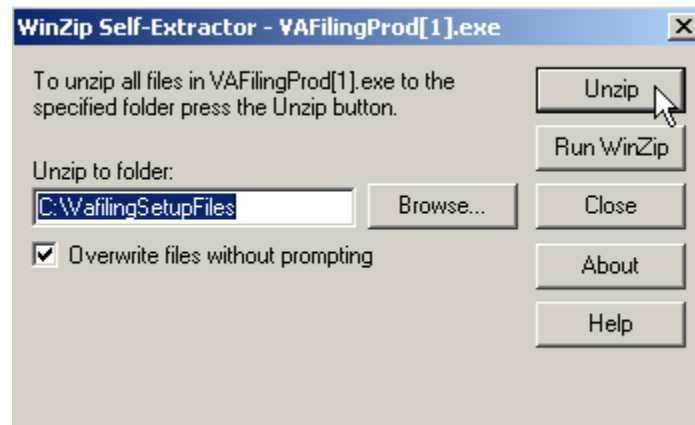
Please Note: the screen you see may be a little different depending on the type of Microsoft Windows operating system you use, Please select the option of opening the file from the current location by clicking the OPEN button. Some times you will see a WARNING message as shown below, please ignore it and proceed further. After you click OPEN as shown below, The Actual download of the VA Filing Setup Program will start.



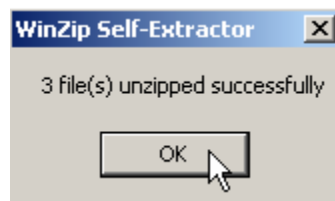
STEP 4: While the file is being downloaded you will see a blue bar indicating the amount of download completed as shown below.



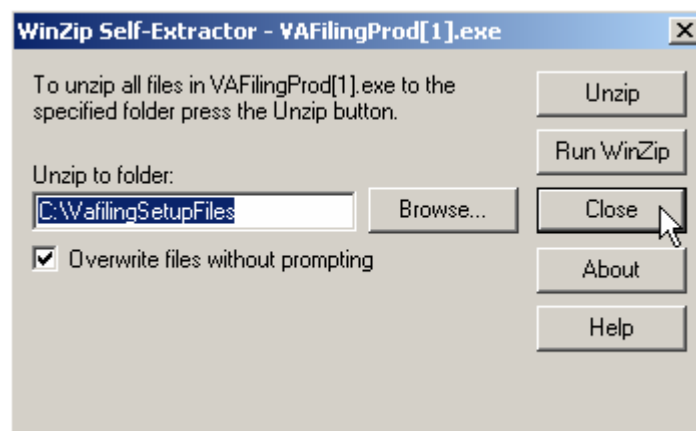
STEP 5: After the VA Filing Setup file download is complete then you will automatically see the **WinZip Self-Extractor window** come up. Click on the **UNZIP** button as shown in the figure below.



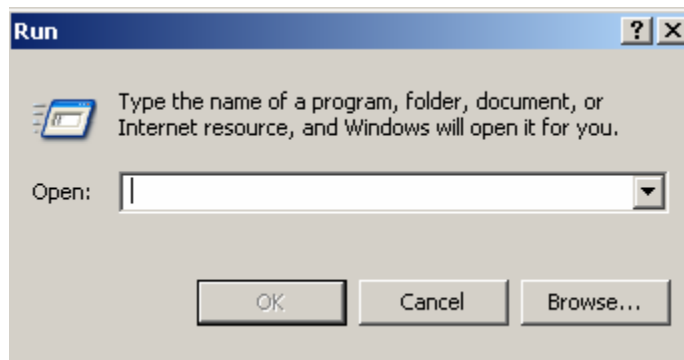
STEP 6: You will now see a message telling you that the files have been unzipped successfully.



STEP 7: Click **Close** to close the WinZip Self-Extractor window as shown in the figure below.

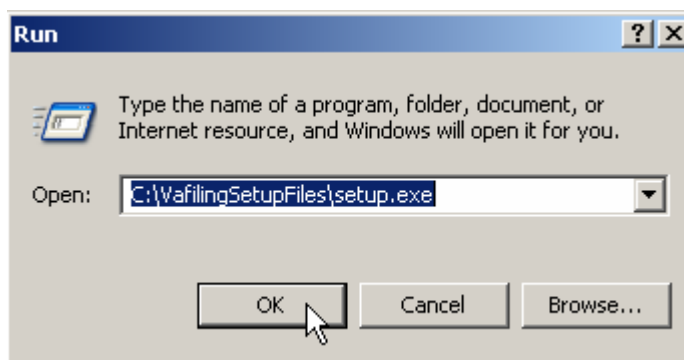


STEP 8: Bring up the Window's Start Menu by clicking the **START** button the bottom left hand corner of the screen. When the Start menu pops up select or click on **RUN**, then the Run window will pop up as shown in the figure below.

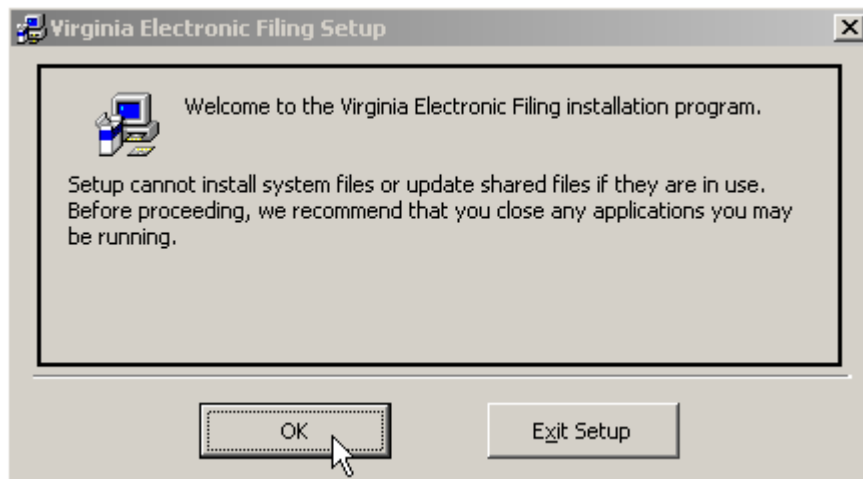


STEP 9: Internet Users: If you downloaded the install, type **C:\VafilingSetupFiles\setup.exe** into the Open Text box as shown in the figure below and after you are done entering the information click **OK** as shown in the figure below.

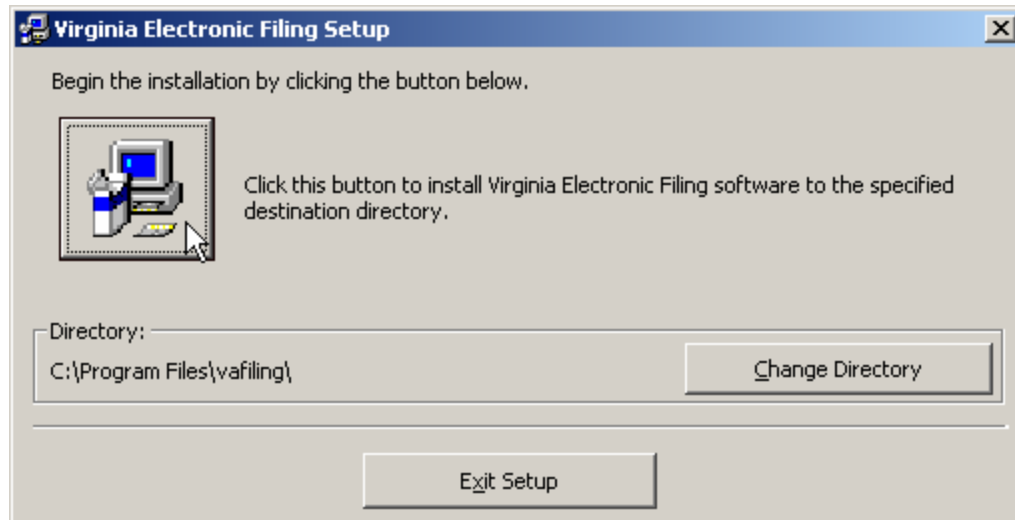
CD-ROM Users: If you are installing with CD-ROM, click on “Browse” and locate the “Setup.exe” file on the disk. Click “Open” and, once you return to the “Run” screen shown below, type **OK**.



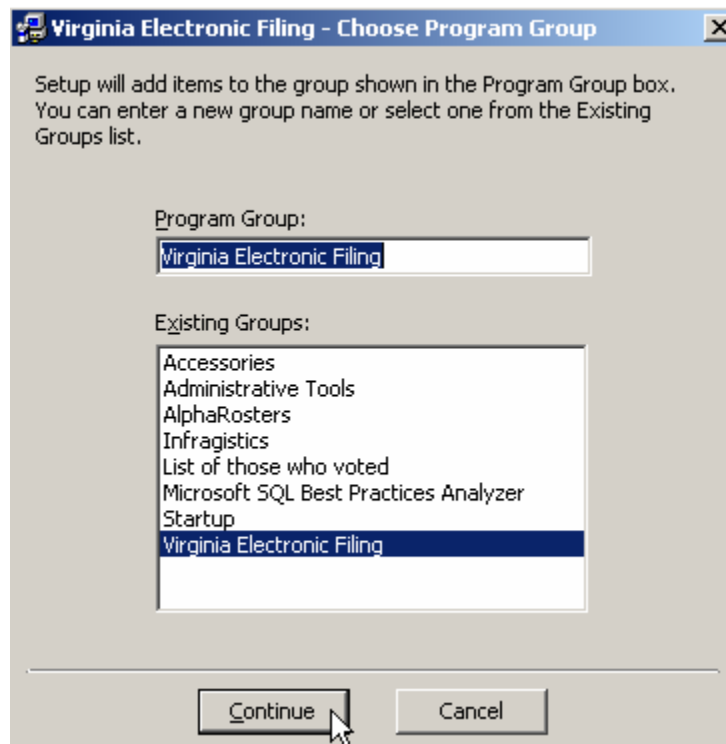
STEP 10: Once you click OK as indicated above, the VA Filing Program Setup screen will pop up as shown below. Click **OK** to begin installation as shown below:



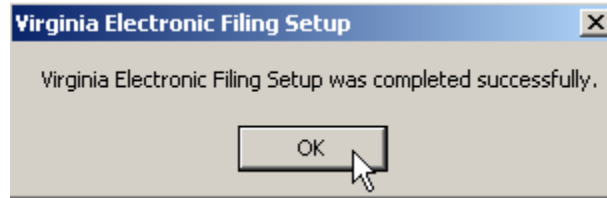
STEP 11: After clicking OK on the above screen, the VA Filing Setup window 2 appears as shown below. Click on the button as shown in the figure below:



STEP 12: Next click on the button **Continue** as shown in the figure below.



STEP 13: Just click OK to complete the setup program



STEP 14: The Installation of the VA Filing Program has been completed.

Problems with Installation? Read the instructions carefully and repeat the process. If you continue to have problems, email your questions to efile@sbe.virginia.gov or support@vpap.org.

Section 2 – Understanding Concept of “Cycle Begin Date”

The biggest change to VAFiling came about because of a law enacted by the 2003 General Assembly that did away with the “Final” report requirement for candidates at the end of each election cycle. This change affects candidates and political committees alike. Understanding this change in the law is the key to current users making an easy transition to Version 3.0.

In the past, a candidate could keep their campaign accounts open indefinitely after an election was held. The candidate had discretion when to file a “Final” report once all of her debts were satisfied. If the candidate was seeking the same office in successive elections, she was required to file several documents “closing” one account and “opening” a new one. This requirement was nothing more than a paper transaction. The result was red tape headaches for candidates and SBE staff alike. It also created a situation where candidates running for the same office all had different starting points for the next election cycle.

The General Assembly remedied this situation by removing the “Final” report requirement for candidates and political committees, except when they are going out of business and closing their account for good. The law also stipulates that candidates no longer have to file a “Statement of Organization” or “Electronic Filing Agreement” at the start of each election cycle. It also specifies that political committees no longer have to file these same documents each January.

Once a candidate and political committee file a Statement of Organization, the document remains in effect as long as the committees continue to exist. A future Statement of Organization is needed only when a candidate or committee needs to amend information – such as change of treasurer.

Under the new law, candidates running for the same office in successive elections are relieved of this paperwork burden. There is no requirement to file a Final report, a new Statement of Organization for the new election and a new Electronic Filing Agreement.

As a result, all candidates running for the same office will be assigned the same “Cycle Begin Date.” For a new candidate seeking an office for the first time, the “Cycle Begin Date” is the date he started raising money. For a candidate seeking the same office in successive elections, the “Cycle Begin Date” will be January 1 of the year following the year in which the last election for that office was held. (Political committees will continue to reset the “Cycle Begin Date” on January 1 of each year.)

VAFiling will require you not only to state a “Cycle Begin Date” but also provide your account balance as of that date.

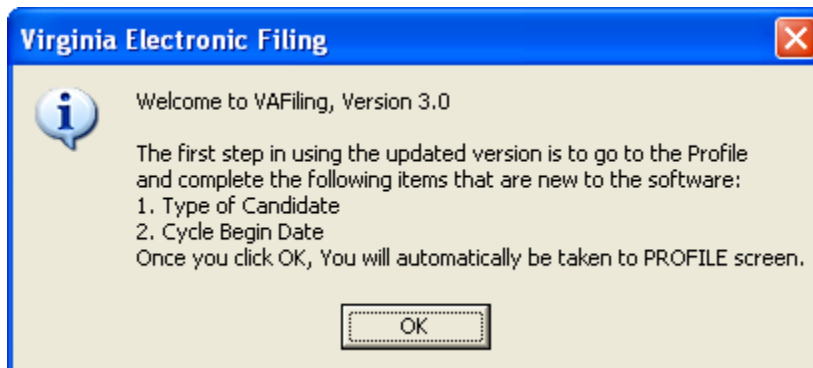
The State Board of Elections will publish a complete list of Cycle Begin Dates. For example, candidates who ran in November 2003 elections will show a Cycle Begin Date of 01/01/2004 for reports filed after 01/15/2004. All political committees should show the same Cycle Begin Date for reports filed after 01/15/2004.

Important Note: The change in the law means that many candidates will be filing reports for the next election cycle before having declared their intent to run in the next election. For example, the report due 7/15/2004 for State Senate candidates will be the first report of the 2007 Senate elections. Filing a July 2004 report does not imply a candidate intends to run again in the next election. A candidate does not declare his intent to run until he files the necessary paperwork with his district political party or with the Elections Services Division of the State Board of Elections.

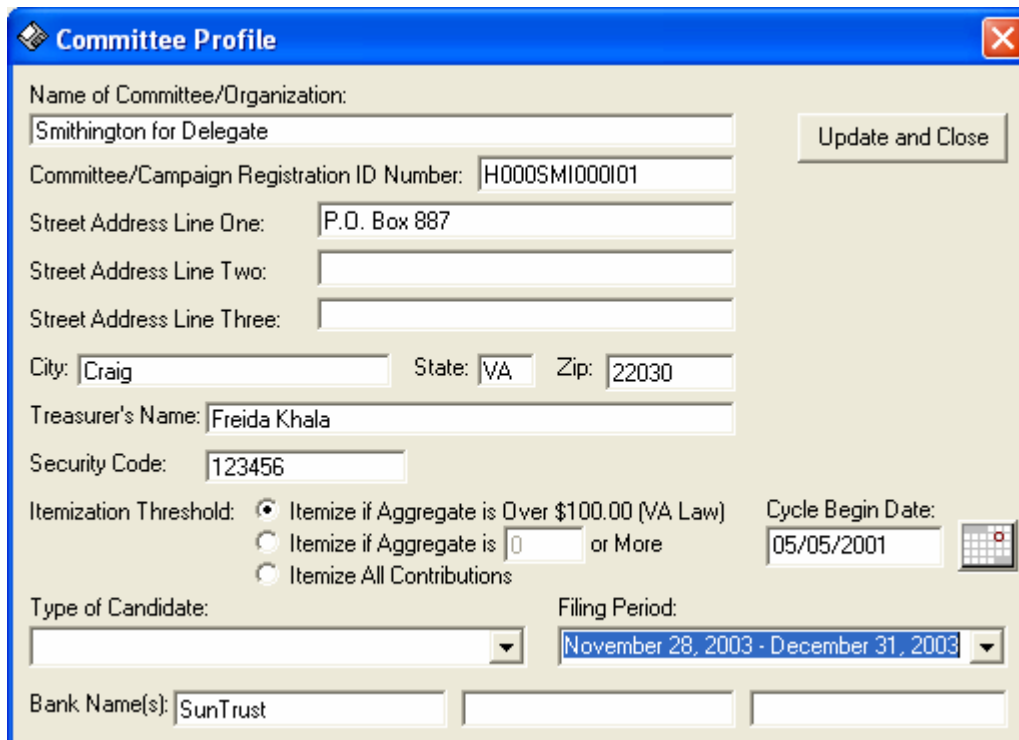
Section 3 – Launching Version 3.0

The software will be installed in the default directory – c:\program files\vafileing – where most current users have their software and files stored. Once you have completed the installation, you can launch Version 3.0 by clicking on the desktop icon used by earlier versions of the software.

1. Click on File → Open and select your database.
2. You will get the following prompt:



3. Click OK.
4. You will be taken to a reconfigured Profile page shown below:



Section 3.1 – The New Profile Screen

The profile has these important changes:

Cycle Begin Date

This feature was introduced to accommodate a new law, adopted by the 2003 General Assembly that specifies all candidates running in the same election will have a common start date for the election cycle. (See discussion in Step 3)

Below are some examples of Cycle Begin Dates for reports filed after 1/15/2004:

- Candidates who ran in the November 2003 elections and plan to run in the next election (or at least have not ruled out a run) will show a Cycle Begin Date of **01/01/2004**.
- Candidates who ran in the November 2003 elections and do not plan to run again, but had not filed a Final report closing out their SBE account as of 12/31/2003 will show a Cycle Begin Date of **01/01/2004**.
- All political committees should show a Cycle Begin Date of **01/01/2004**.
- Candidates running in the May 2004 elections and who have run for the same seat before should show a Cycle Begin Date as the day after the period ended in which they filed a Final report from the May 2002 or May 2000 elections, whichever occurred later. (Candidates in future May elections will have standardized Cycle Begin Dates)
- Candidates running in the May 2004 elections and who had not sought election for that office before should show a Cycle Begin Date as the date they began accepting contributions.
- Candidates running in the November 2005 House of Delegates races or the 2007 State Senate Races who have not sought the office before should show a Cycle Begin Date of **01/01/2004**.
- Candidates running in the November 2005 statewide races for Governor, Lt. Gov. or Attorney General should show a Cycle Begin Date as the date they began accepting contributions for statewide office.

Advancing the “Cycle Begin Date” after each election (candidates) or each calendar year (political committees) will ensure that your donor’s aggregated amounts are correct. The “Cycle Begin Date” serves the same function as the “Date to Begin Aggregating” in earlier versions. VAFiling will ignore any transactions prior to the “Cycle Begin Date” when calculating aggregate giving from each donor.

Type of Candidate

You must select a "Type of Candidate" from the list below:

- ☐ Candidates in May 2004 election
- ☐ Candidates in May 2005 election
- ☐ Candidates in November 2004 election
- ☐ Candidates in November 2005 election
- ☐ Candidates not on ballot until 2006 or later
- ☐ Political committees in 2004
- ☐ Political committees in 2005
- ☐ All Others

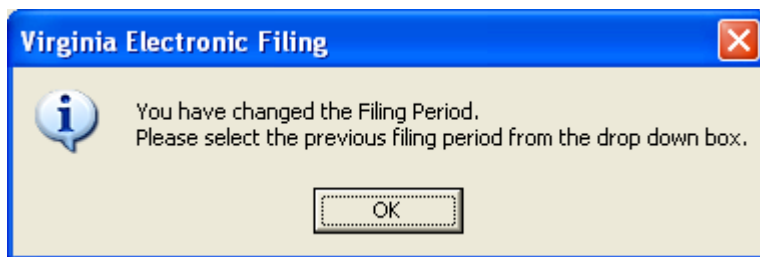
Once you select a candidate type, the software will customize the filing periods to your candidate or committee. This will enable you to avoid the earlier inconvenience of sorting through a long list of filing periods used by all types of candidates.

Filing Period

Earlier versions of VAFiling required you to re-enter the "Filing Period" several times during the process of preparing a report. Version 3.0 requires you to select this period only once – on the Profile Screen.

After you select a Candidate Type, you will be prompted to select a filing period from a list drawn specifically for each candidate type.

Once you select a Filing Period, you will get this prompt:



Click OK and you will be taken to the Preset Values Screen.

Note: If you want to add a Filing Period not found on the list, VAFiling still allows you to do this by going to Add Data → Add New Filing Periods.

Preset Values

Another improved feature in Version 3.0 is that the software can now remember your ending balance and total raised/spent from one report to the next. Below is an explanation of how this feature works and other changes to this screen:

Preset Values

Balance at Start of Election Cycle
 For candidates, enter the balance of your campaign account at the end of the previous election cycle. This value should be zero for candidates seeking an office for the first time. For political committees, enter the balance of your account at the end of the previous calendar year. New committees should enter zero.

Balance at Start of Election Cycle:

Preset Values
 Current Filing Period: **July 1, 2004 - December 31, 2004**

Select the reporting period immediately preceeding the period selected in the Profile:

Previous Filing Period:

Beginning loan balance (Ending Loan Balance from last report):

Beginning Balance (Ending Balance from last report):

Total Receipts from last report (Total receipts this election cycle):

Previous Disbursement Totals (Total disbursements this election cycle):

Balance at Start of Election Cycle

You must manually enter the amount of money in your account on the "Cycle Begin Date" entered on the Profile. This number will appear on Line 21 of Schedule H.

This number will remain the same throughout the election cycle (candidates) and calendar year (political committees.)

Previous Filing Period

Version 3.0 can remember your ending balance and total raised/spent from previous reports. You simply select the previous filing period and the values will automatically fill in the Preset Values.

However, the automated feature does not work completely when making the first report of an election cycle. That will be the case for a majority of candidates and political committees when preparing the report due 7/15/2004. You will have to make some manual adjustments. You should not have to change "Beginning Loan Balance" and "Beginning Balance." However, you should reset the "Total Receipts" and "Previous Disbursement Totals" to zero.

Click OK.

Section 4 – Other Changes in the Software

Section 4.1 - Schedule G and Schedule H

The biggest change you'll notice is Schedule H, which the State Board of Elections reconfigured to accommodate the changes in state law. The bottom one-third of the page is an expanded summary of money raised and spent during the election cycle (candidates) or calendar year (political committees). This section (discussed in detail below) will help treasurers reconcile their accounts and avoid math errors that, compounded over time, can make it impossible to arrive at an accurate balance.

There are other changes specific to the VAFiling program:

First, the REFRESH button has been eliminated. No longer will you have to open the summary schedules and have to take another step – pushing the Refresh button – before getting updated numbers.

Second, the Filing Period menu in the upper left corner has been eliminated. You no longer will have to select the Filing Period on this page. The Filing Period is automatically set to the period selected on the Profile.

Schedule G		Schedule H	
Filing Period: January 1, 2004 - June 30, 2004			
Schedule G			
16. *Beginning balance [from Line 19 of last report]	\$	5,000.00	
17. Receipts for reporting period:			
a. Add: Contributions received this period [from Line 5 of Schedule G]	\$	234.00	
b. Add: Rebates, refunds and interest [from Line 6 of Schedule G]	\$	0.00	
c. Add: Loans received this period [from Line 12 of Schedule G]	\$	0.00	
d. Subtotal: Contributions and Receipts received this period [Sum 17a, 17b and 17c]	\$	234.00	
e. Total expendable funds [add lines 16 and 17d]	\$	5,234.00	
18. Disbursements for reporting period:			
a. Expenditures made this period [from Line 10 on Schedule G]	\$	20.00	
b. Add: Loans repaid this period [from Line 14 on Schedule G]	\$	0.00	
c. Add: Other surplus funds paid out [from Schedule I]	\$	0.00	
d. Total payments made [Add Lines 18a, 18b and 18c]	\$	20.00	
19. Ending balance [Subtract Line 18d from Line 17e]	\$	5,214.00	
20. Total Unpaid Debts [from Schedule F of this report]	\$	5,000.00	
COMMITTEE'S Receipts and Disbursements - Election Cycle Totals			
21. Balance at Start of Cycle	\$	5,000.00	
22. Totals Receipts from last Report [Line 24 from last report]	\$	0.00	
23. Receipts from Current Reporting Period [Line 17d above]	\$	234.00	
24. Total Receipts from Election Cycle [Add lines 22 and 23]	\$	234.00	
25. Total funds available [Add lines 21 and 24]	\$	5,234.00	
26. Total Disbursements from Last Report [Line 28 from last report]	\$	0.00	
27. Disbursements from current reporting period [Line 18d above]	\$	20.00	
28. Total Disbursements this Election Cycle [Add lines 26 and 27]	\$	20.00	
29. Ending Balance [Subtract line 28 from line 25 - Difference must match line 19]	\$	5,214.00	

The bottom one third of Schedule H is now a summary of Election Cycle Totals that will help treasurers keep track of money raised and spent during the election cycle (candidates) or calendar year

(committees.) Look closely, and you can see that Line 19 should equal Line 29.

Line 21: Balance at Start of Cycle: This is the amount of money in the committee's account on the Cycle Begin Date entered in the Profile. This value is entered in the Preset Values.

Line 22: Total Receipts from Last Report: This is the amount of revenue reported on Line 24 of the previous report.

Line 23: Receipts from Current Reporting Period: This is the total dollar amount of revenue reported during the current reporting period. The current reporting period is selected on the Profile.

Line 24: Total Receipts from Election Cycle: Sum of Line 22 and 23.

Line 25: Total Funds Available: Sum of Line 21 and Line 24

Line 26: Total Disbursements from Last Report: This is the amount of expenditures listed on Line 28 of the last report.

Line 27: Disbursements from Current Reporting Period. Amount of expenditures reported during the current reporting period. The current reporting period is selected on the Profile.

Line 28: Total Disbursements this Election Cycle: Sum of Line 26 and Line 27.

Line 29: Ending Balance: Line 25 minus Line 28. (This total should equal Line 19 above)

Section 4.2 - Creating Electronic Reports

There have been several changes to this screen. One significant change is that e-filed reports should be sent to an new address: efile@sbe.virginia.gov

Type of Filing: You should specify if the report is “Regular” (meaning first time filed) or an “Amended.” If the report is Amended, you should specify whether it is the first amended, second amended, etc.

File Name: To select a name, click on the gray square with three dots, located to the right of the blank line. The SBE would ask that you please name each e-filed .txt report according to the following system:

In the first four years of e-filing, it did not matter what you named the .txt files that you emailed to the State Board of Elections. Mandatory e-filing for political committees will dramatically increase the volume of files, so SBE has put in place a formal system for naming .txt files:

- Candidates must use their last name followed by the report’s due date. For example, “The Committee to Re-elect Karp” would label its report due January 15, 2006 as “**Karp_01152006.txt**”. If the January 15, 2005 report is amended, the first amendment would be called “**Karp_01152006_A1.txt**”. If it must be amended more than once then you will change the **A1** to **A2**, **A3**, etc. (Candidates with common last names should also include their first initial. “Friends of Paul Jones” would start with “JonesP...”)
- Political Committees must name their files with your Committee ID# (dropping the VA and the hyphen) followed by the report’s due date. For example, “XYZ-PAC” whose Committee ID is VA – 05-250 would name their January 15, 2006 report as “**05250_01152006.txt**”. If the January 15, 2006 report is amended, the file name would be “**05250_01152006_A1.txt**”. If it must be amended more than once then you will change the **A1** to **A2**, **A3**, etc.

Activity Type: Check “Activity” if there are any transactions during the filing period, even if the only activity is bank interest or fees. Check “No Activity” if there are absolutely no transactions during the filing period.

Sending Your Report

Do not attach your reports to web browser based e-mail programs such as Hotmail or Yahoo!. These programs tend to corrupt the attachment and our database is unable to read the report. AOL, Outlook and Eudora are acceptable e-mail programs to use.

SBE requests that you enter the following information in the subject line of your email:

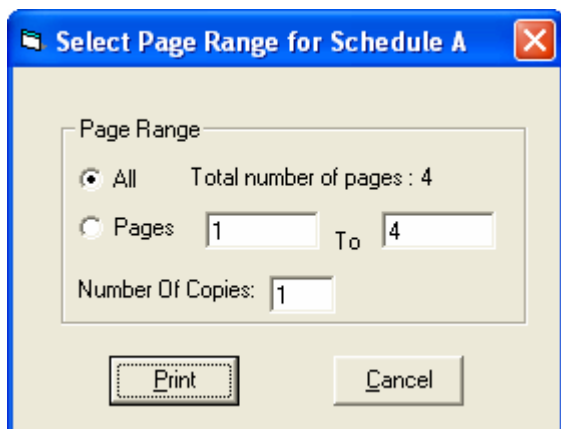
- 1) Name of Committee
- 2) Report Due Date
- 3) Whether it is a regular filing or an amendment to a previous filing.

For example, "The Committee to Elect Elvis" would write in their subject line **"Committee to Elect Elvis, January 15, 2005, Amended"**

Section 4.3 - Printing Paper Reports

The printing process has been greatly streamlined. The State Board of Elections considered the request from many candidates to add a single "Print Report" button that would print all schedules for a filing period. The request proved too difficult, but the SBE did the next best thing: It reduced the number of clicks needed to print a schedule from 7 to 3.

Now, you simply go to Prepare C & E Report → Print (Selected Schedule) and the print preview will appear instantly. Click "Print Document" and then you will get the dialogue box below:



You can now select the number of copies of each page you'd like. Click "Print."

VAFiling now prints the occupation/employer for donors on Schedule B and also lists expenditures on Schedule D in chronological order.

Section 4.4 - Bank Account Numbers Eliminated

Privacy concerns have led the State Board of Elections to no longer require Bank Account numbers to be listed on Schedule H.

Section 4.5 - Overwrite Protection

Past versions of VAFiling made it possible for treasurers to erase their databases by accident. This occurred when treasurers thought they were opening a file, but instead clicked on File → New and selected their existing database. A prompt warned that they already had a file by that name and if they wanted to replace the file with a new one. Some treasurers ignored or did not read the prompt and clicked “OK”, causing a catastrophic loss of data.

Version 3.0 now makes it impossible to overwrite an existing database.

Section 4.6 - Backing Up Files

Computers can malfunction, causing a catastrophic loss of data. Imagine if you tried to boot up your computer this morning, only to discover that all of your files had vanished or had been corrupted by a virus. Each year, several candidates and committees lose their data because their treasurers ignored repeated warnings to take steps to back up their VAFiling databases.

Earlier versions of VAFiling made it difficult for users to protect their files by creating a backup file in a place other than the hard drive. Version 3.0 includes a backup device that works this way:

Click on File → Backup Database

This will lead to a prompt that reads: “Please note that all VAFiling Screens/Windows will be closed during this operation. Do you wish to continue?”

Click Yes

This will lead to a “Backup Database” dialogue box where you can select the location where you want to place a backup (.bak) file.

A simple 3x5 floppy is not adequate; most VAFiling database (.mdb) files are too large that fit on the capacity of a floppy disk. Here are several options you should consider:

- If your computer is on a network, copy the files to a designated folder on your network drive each time you add or amend data.
- If your computer has a zip drive, copy the files to a 100- or 250-MB disk each time you add or amend data.

Also, if your computer is a read/write CD Rom, burn a copy of your database (.mdb file) each time you enter data or amend data.

A final option would be to use compression software (such as WinZip) to enable you to fit your VAFiling databases on a 3x5 floppy disk.

If your hardware options do not include any of the above, SBE strongly recommends that you purchase an external read/write CD Rom or an external ZIP drive.

***This document was prepared by David Poole, Executive Director
at the Virginia Public Access Project.***